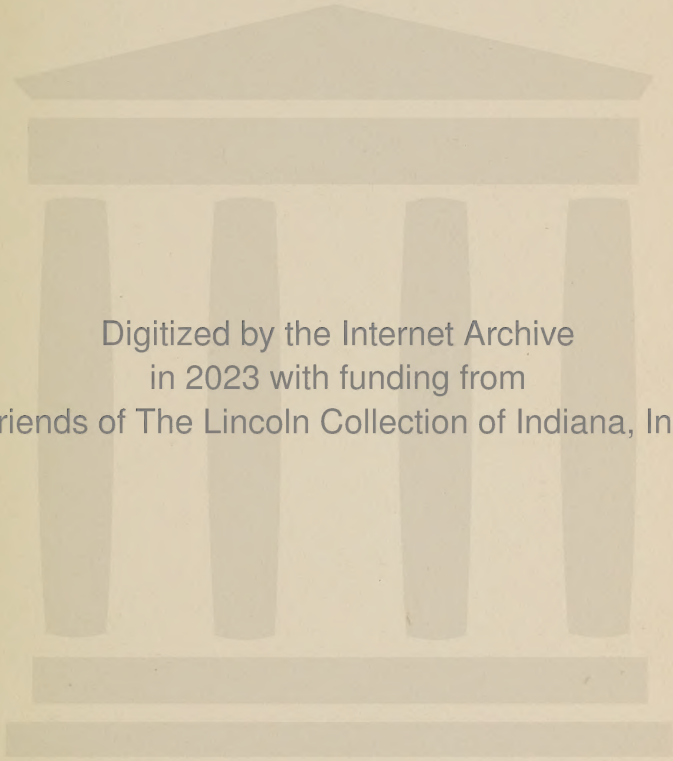
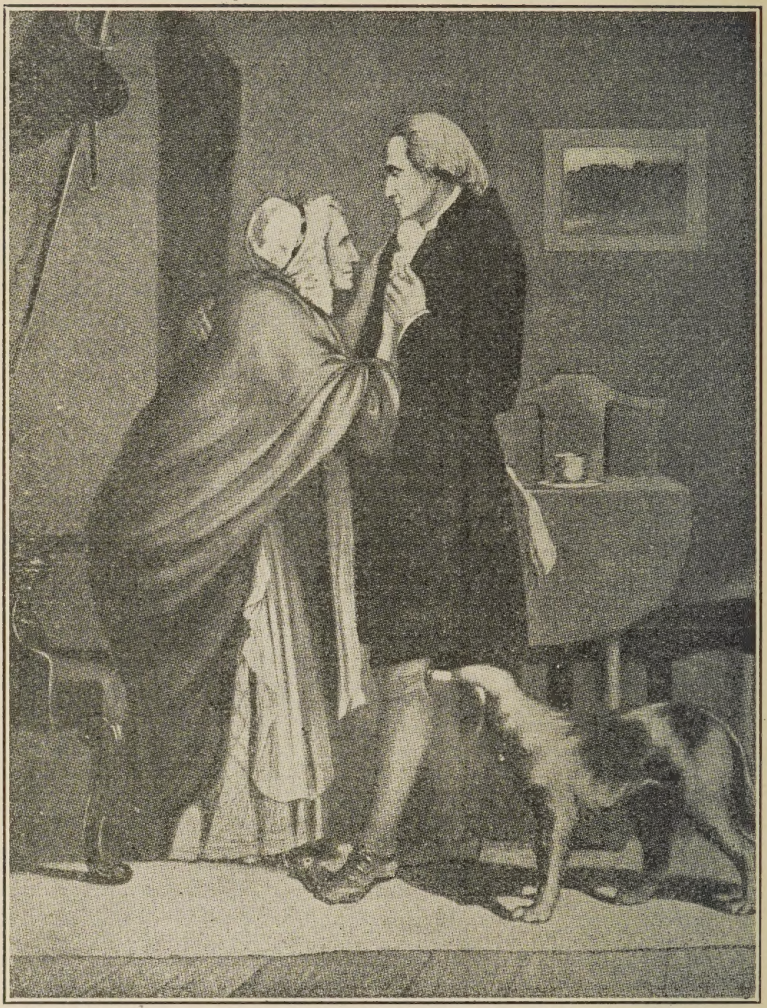
When the Presidents were Boys

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Washington's Last Interview with His Mother.

WHEN THE PRESIDENTS WERE BOYS

Washington
--- to ---
Coolidge

TOLD IN

PICTURES

—— BY ——

WINIFRED ESTABROOK

THE STATLER PRESS

JOHNSTOWN, PA.

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Washington as a Surveyor

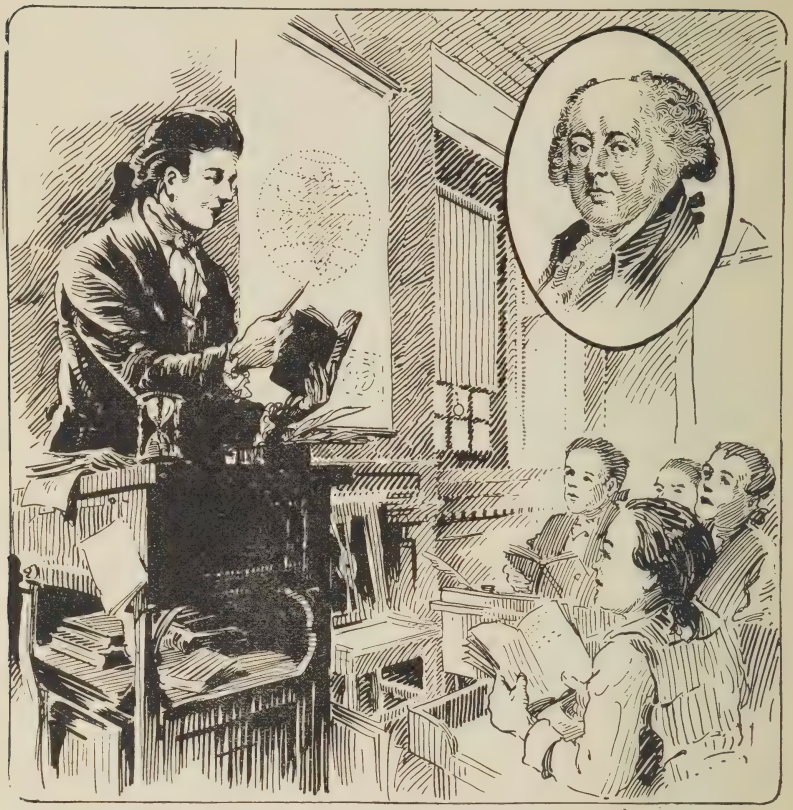
THE MOTHER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Augustine Washington, the father of the first President, was twice married. His second wife, Mary Ball, became the mother of George. The father died when forty-nine years of age, and the widow survived him forty-six years. Before assuming the duties of President, George Washington made a journey to Fredericksburg to bid his mother farewell. When he told her of his election, she replied, "Go, George, fulfill the high destiny which Heaven appears to have intended you for. Go, my son, and may that Heaven's and a mother's blessing be with you always."

AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON, the father of George, was a Virginia planter, the owner of vast tracts and one of the richest men in the country. He married Mary Ball, who became the mother of George. Before her marriage she was regarded as one of the most beautiful girls in Virginia and a woman of rare culture and dignity. Her well-balanced mind gave her great influence over her noble son, which she retained until the hour of her death. The Washington family resided on the banks of the Potomas River in Westmoreland County, where the father died when George was ten years old.

The Province of Virginia offered scanty means of education. Enough knowledge for practical business life was the most that could be obtained. Reading, writing, arithmetic and the mathematics were alone within the reach of Washington. It is said that he was a diligent student; but that his passion for active sports and military exercises was displayed at a very early age. He delighted in running, jumping, wrestling, tossing bars, and other feats of strength and agility. It is said that while at school his reputation for truth and judgment was so well established, that his fellow pupils were accustomed to make him the arbiter of their disputes, and never failed to be satisfied with his decision. While at school Washington was devoted to the study of geometry, trigonometry, and surveying. He surveyed the fields and plantations around the school house, and with great skill and precision entered the measurements and calculations in his books.

Lord Fairfax, a friend and neighbor of the Washington family, had purchased immense tracts of wild lands in the rich valleys of the Allegheny Mountains. These were to be measured and divided into lots. The service was difficult and dangerous. The country swarmed with hostile Indians, and the hardships of a wilderness were to be endured. Washington, accompanied by George Fairfax, performed the service required with skill and accuracy. His reputation as a surveyor was established. The knowledge of the wilderness and its inhabitants which he acquired was of great use to him in subsequent surveying and military expeditions. Following this work, Washington was given many important missions to undertake by the Governor of the Province. The performance of these early tasks with skill and energy laid the foundation of the career which has made the name of Washington immortal.



John Adams as a School Teacher

THE MOTHER OF JOHN ADAMS

Susannah Boylston, the daughter of Peter Boylston, became the mother of the distinguished signer of the Declaration of Independence and the second President of the United States. She married John Adams, and their son was named for his father. The parents were Puritans, and very religious people, and his mother's religious training was never effaced from her son's memory. In later years, the son, after his retirement from the Presidency, gave his old home town a beautiful church, and when President, he issued a Proclamation for a Day of Prayer.

JOHN ADAMS was born in the present town of Quincy, Massachusetts. His father was a farmer of moderate means, a worthy, industrious man, toiling early and late for the very frugal support which such labor could furnish his family. The father was anxious that his son should have a good education and enter a profession, but John Adams was not fond of his books. He liked outdoor life more than the seclusion of the study. When the son was about fourteen years of age, the father insisted that he must decide what business he intended to follow. One evening the son declared he wished to become a farmer. The next morning at an early hour, John was with his hoe in the field. After several days of hard labor John decided to go back to his books. There was a very good school in the town and young Adams laid aside his hoe for the grammar. Later he entered Harvard College, and it was a great effort for his father to support him while there for he found it necessary to add to his labors as a farmer the occupation of a shoe-maker to meet the expenses of the household. When John graduated at twenty years of age, he considered he had received all the support he could expect from his father; and, with his education as his only capital, he started out to win his way in the world. The first thing that the young graduate needed was money. He obtained the situation of instructor in one of the public schools in Worcester, which was then a town of only a few hundred people. His ardent, intense nature found school teaching a slow business at best. In some of his moods he was heartily sick of it, he felt the stir of larger ambitions; he thirsted for a wider sphere of action. While teaching school young Adams also, studied law. When he was admitted to the practice of law he declared with firm resolution never to commit any meanness or injustice in the practice of the law. Adams devoted himself to his profession with great vigor and rose rapidly in public esteem. The young lawyer eagerly espoused the cause of the Colonists when the British Government began its career of aggression upon them. He denounced the Stamp Act and other measures of taxation. He soon became a leading advocate of independence, and throughout the Revolutionary War, devoted his great talents to the interests of the Colonists. He became one of the early builders of the Republic and succeeded Washington to the Presidency.



Thomas Jefferson Playing the Violin

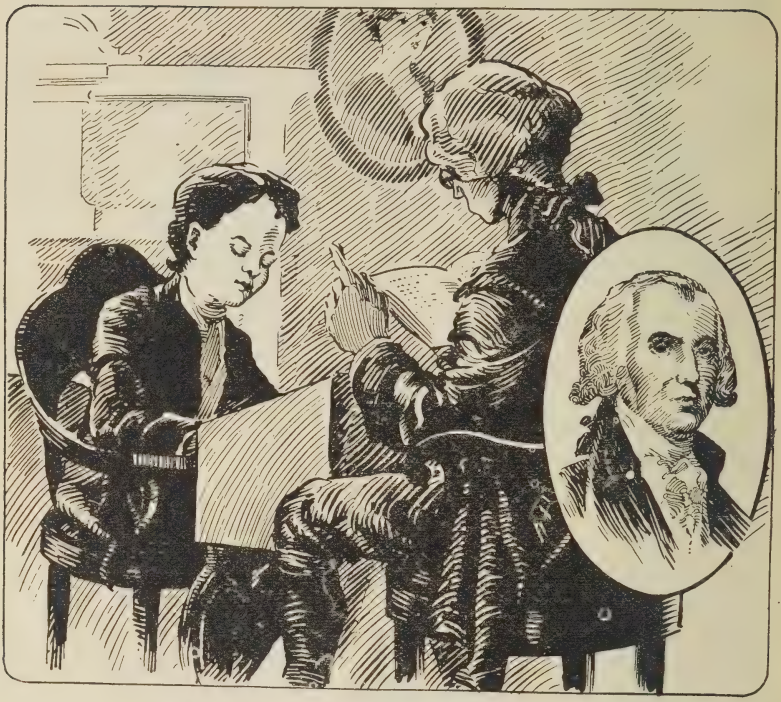
THE MOTHER OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

Peter Jefferson, the father of the President, married Jane Randolph, daughter of an aristocratic and wealthy planter named Isham Randolph. She possessed fine intellectual gifts and was fond of letter writing, accomplishments that appeared so prominently in her son. The Jeffersons were devout members of the Church of England, and the children were all reared and baptised in that church. When Thomas was three or four years old, he had been taught to repeat his prayers at his mother's knee. He knew his Bible, and carefully used his prayer book all his life.

THOMAS JEFFERSON was a very active and energetic youth. He took great delight in out-of-door sports, in paddling and swimming the nearby streams, riding horses, hunting for game with his gun, and climbing the neighboring hills fleet-footed. His father was the owner of large landed property in Virginia and the mother was a woman of rare culture and refinement. From her he acquired his fondness for music. There were eight children in the Jefferson family and they were all musical. Jefferson's violin was a source of never-ending delight to him. He was greatly attached to his eldest sister who was his constant companion in their musical hours. She could sing and also play a number of instruments well. The love for his violin remained with Jefferson all his life. The house left by father was burned to the ground and his valuable library disappeared in the flames. Jefferson was absent from home at the time. A slave came to him with the appalling news. "But were none of my books saved?" exclaimed Mr. Jefferson. "None," was the reply; and then the face of the music-loving negro grew radiant as he added, "But massa we saved the fiddle." The slave knew his master's love for his fiddle.

Peter Jefferson, the father, died when Thomas was fourteen years of age, and it was his dying injunction that his son should be well educated. After a few years' attendance at the best local elementary schools, Jefferson entered William & Mary College, from which so many of the distinguished sons of Virginia graduated. The young student brought with him "the strength of the hills" and set himself bravely to work in the old college. He was eager to learn. He studied much of the time, fifteen hours a day, but the strain of overwork did not break down the hardy constitution of the youth from the hills. At twilight he indulged in a little respite. He rushed off to a great stone which formed a landmark a mile out of town, and this and the race back again were his daily exercise. After leaving college, Jefferson became a law student in the office of George Wythe, a noted lawyer, in his day. While a student here, he heard the famous speech of Patrick Henry against the Stamp Act. Animated by the spirit of that great orator, he from that time stood forth as the champion for his country. Several years later Jefferson attended the Continental Congress which adopted the Declaration of Independence. He himself drafted the document that made this nation. He gave practically his entire life to the public service.

The Constitution of the United States furnishes the opportunity for the rich and poor alike to serve their country in its highest places.



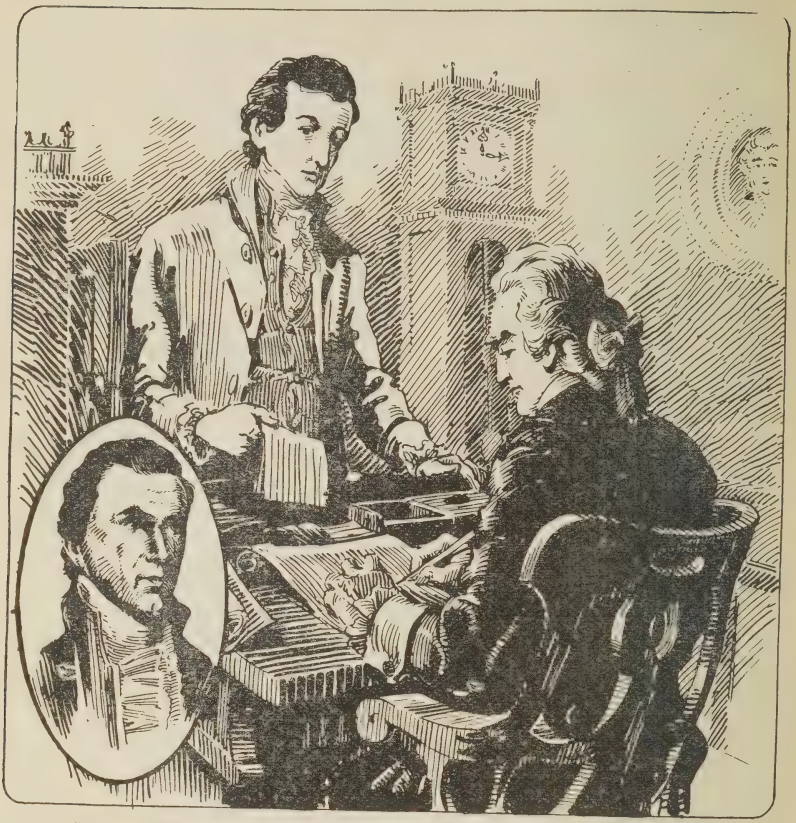
James Madison Studying Under the Private Tutor

THE MOTHER OF JAMES MADISON

Nelly Conway, daughter of Francis Conway, a Virginia planter, was married to James Madison, also a planter, in 1749, and these became the parents of James Madison, the fourth President. The mother had all the graces of the typical Southern woman, and noted for piety and learning. James Madison was tenderly attached to his mother. She outlived her husband twenty-eight years, and died at the ripe old age of ninety-eight years. She lived to enjoy the companionship of her distinguished son, after his retirement from the Presidency, eleven years,—a longer time than any other mother of a President.

JAMES MADISON was a born student, caring even in his childhood little for play and the rough games that delight healthy, robust boys. Many of the Presidents enjoyed out-door life and took a keen interest in hunting and games of all sorts, but young Madison would have none of these. His father was a wealthy planter and owned large tracts of land in Virginia. The Madisons were among the first settlers that came to the Virginia Colony. James studied mostly under a private tutor in his own home as the schools of that day were poor and few. Even when a mere boy Madison acquired a good deal of Greek, Latin, of French and Spanish. At the age of eighteen he entered Princeton College in New Jersey. While there, he carried on his studies to such an extent that for months together he had allowed himself only three hours out of the twenty-four for sleep. This prolonged mental effort so impaired his health that he suffered from the handicap all his life. Upon his return to his home in Virginia, after graduation, he taught his younger brothers and sisters. He was the eldest of the family of seven children—all of whom attained maturity and passed through life esteemed and beloved,—thanks to the brotherly interest taken by James in their welfare and education.

James Madison was a youth of high moral principles. When a candidate for the General Assembly of his state, he lost the election because he refused to treat the voters with whiskey. It was customary in those days, in some sections of the country, to win votes by this manner of treating, but to James the practice was repulsive and his conscience would not permit him to take advantage of it. While still a very young man Madison entered the public service. He was a most active member of the convention that framed the Constitution of Virginia. It was not long after the War of the Revolution was brought to a close and the Treaty of Peace was signed, that Madison saw that the young nation would go to pieces unless a strong bond of union held the States together. He was a strong advocate of the Constitution. His mind which had become a great store house of useful knowledge on public and political questions was one of the guiding forces when the great Constitution of the United States was framed, under which a great nation has grown and prospered beyond the dreams of its most hopeful friends.



James Monroe, Secretary to the Governor of Virginia

THE MOTHER OF JAMES MONROE

Spence Monroe, the father of James, chose for his wife a beautiful Southern woman whose name was Eliza Jones. She came from a noted family, equally as patriotic and prominent as that of her husband. Her brother was a distinguished Judge in Virginia and twice a delegate to the Continental Congress. The environment, parentage and home atmosphere of James Monroe were of the highest order. Near the home of the Monroes lived many of the distinguished men of the Revolutionary days,—Washington, Lee, Madison and Jefferson.

JAMES MONROE was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia, among whose river meadows George Washington spent his childhood. The father of James was a planter. His fine fertile estate was close to George Washington's birthplace. James Monroe in childhood enjoyed all the advantages of education which the country could then afford. He was early sent to a very fine school, and at the age of sixteen entered William and Mary College. When he was in college but two years, the Declaration of Independence was adopted, and the vigorous young Monroe was impatient to take an active part in the struggle between the colonists and the mother country. Leaving college, he hastened to General Washington's headquarters in New York, and enrolled himself as a cadet in the army. It was one of the gloomiest hours in our history. The British were sweeping all before them, but James Monroe, with courage which never faltered, took his place in the ranks. He so distinguished himself by his bravery in a number of battles that the Commander-in-Chief rewarded him by a promotion to a captaincy. At Germantown, Monroe stood by the side of Lafayette when the French Marquis received his wound. At the battle of Trenton, he fought so gallantly amid the cold and snows that he won the commendation of his superior officers. During the action a ball struck him in the shoulder.

After receiving his wound, the young captain returned to Virginia and took up the study of law. He entered the office of Thomas Jefferson, who was then Governor of Virginia. Mr. Jefferson had a large and admirable library, and inspired his pupil with zeal for study. Jefferson formed a great attachment for the youth and made him his secretary. Monroe was very fortunate in coming under the influence of this great man. He developed a very noble character and won the love of all who knew him. He entered public life at an early age. He successively became a member of the Virginia Assembly, Continental Congress, the committee which drafted the Constitution of the United States, and the United States Senate. While President, Monroe made a memorable journey through all the states and was received with enthusiasm everywhere. He wrote the famous message setting forth the policy that since has become known as the "Monroe Doctrine." He was one of the well-to-do men of our early history who devoted their life and talents to the public welfare.



John Quincy Adams, Secretary to the Peace Commissioners

THE MOTHER OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Abigail Smith, who was a daughter of Rev. William Smith, a prominent Congregational minister, married John Adams, who was then preparing himself for the legal profession. The family of Abigail frowned upon the union, as that profession was not held in high repute in those days. Her grandfather, John Quincy, exclaimed, "What! Abigail Smith marry one of the dishonest tribe of lawyers!" The parents of John Quincy Adams were devout Christians. When he was more than eighty years old, he paid the simple tribute to the faith of his parents, by repeating every night before he slept the nursery prayer his mother taught him in his infant years.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS was born in the rural home of his distinguished father, John Adams, in Quincy, Mass. His mother, a woman of education and exalted worth, watched over his childhood during the almost constant absence of his father. During his first years Mrs. Adams herself taught her son the elements of English. At an early age young Adams gave indication of the unusual talents and wisdom which later made him the most learned of our Presidents. Few Presidents were blessed with such noble parents. No other President was so fortunate in his youth to have become associated with so many distinguished men of his own country and of foreign nations. When but eight years of age, John Quincy Adams stood with his mother upon an eminence, listening to the booming of the great battle on Bunker's Hill, and gazing upon the smoke and flame billowing up from the conflagration of Charlestown. Often, during the siege of Boston, he watched the shells thrown day and night by the combatants.

When he was eleven years old he sailed with his father for Paris, where his father was to join Franklin and Lee as representatives of the new nation at the French Court. The boy spent a year and a half in association with these distinguished men. They were soon attracted by the boy's unusual intelligence. After two years in America, the father was again sent abroad, empowered to negotiate a treaty of peace with England, and the son accompanied him as his secretary. The father and son traveled from capital to capital, in the interest of the new nation, meeting the most eminent statesmen and scholars of the Continent. When the Commissioners from the United States met in Europe to negotiate peace with England, young Adams was chosen Secretary and performed his duties so well that he won the commendation of the distinguished members of that body. With rare judgment, after the conclusion of his father's work abroad, John Quincy Adams preferred to return to America to complete his education in an American College. He wished also to study law, that, with an honorable profession, he might be able to obtain an independent support. Soon after his admission to the practice of law, clients came in great numbers,—a reward richly merited by the purity of his character, the loftiness of his principles, and his intense application to every study which would aid him to act well his part in life. Washington was greatly impressed with the talents of the young lawyer, and appointed him Minister to the Netherlands, being then only twenty-seven years of age.



Andrew Jackson as an Apprentice to a Sadler

THE MOTHER OF ANDREW JACKSON

Andrew Jackson's mother's name was Elizabeth Hutchinson. She was married to Andrew Jackson in Ireland, and came with her husband to America in 1765. The parents were ardent Presbyterians. Mrs. Jackson was very religious, and had fond hopes that her son Andrew might some day become a minister; and to that end, she regularly read the Bible to him, and toiled, schemed and impoverished herself to give him an education. Her early death ended her hopes. Andrew Jackson loved and revered his mother with a passionate devotion throughout his entire life. In the heat of a political campaign, his enemies published statements reflecting on his mother, and Jackson, in tears, said to his wife, "Myself I can defend; you I can defend, but now they have assailed the memory of my mother."

ANDREW JACKSON was born near the boundary line between North and South Carolina, the son of poor immigrants who came from the north of Ireland. Before Andrew was born, the father died, and the widow with two children was left in utter destitution. Mrs. Jackson lived with a relative for ten years and repaid the kindness by washing, mending, and cooking. Andrew grew up a very rough, rude, turbulent boy. When five or six years of age he was sent to what was called a school, in a wretched log pen about twenty feet square. Here he learned to read tolerably well. Spelling was an art which he never attained. He became somewhat familiar with the four fundamental rules of arithmetic. This was about all the school education he ever received. He grew up to be a tall lank boy, with coarse hair and freckled cheeks, with bare feet dangling from trousers too short for him, very fond of athletic sports, running, boxing, wrestling. He was generous to the younger and weaker boys.

When Jackson was nine years of age the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the war soon swept down into the Carolinas, bringing terror, blood, and desolation to the humble cabins of the inhabitants. When Andrew was fourteen, he and his brother were taken prisoners by a body of dragoons sent out by Cornwallis, the British Commander. A British officer ordered Andrew to brush his mud-spattered boots, which he refused to do. Thereupon, the officer drew his sword and rained blows upon the helpless boy. Having heard of the sad plight of her two sons, Mrs. Jackson hastened to their aid and obtained their release from prison. From exposure on their journey homeward in the midst of a drenching rain, the boys took small-pox. Robert and the mother died, and Andrew was left alone in the world, without father, mother, sister, or brother, and without one dollar he could call his own. Before Andrew had fully recovered his strength, he entered a shop to learn the trade of a saddler, and for six months labored diligently in this calling. Unfortunately, he gambled away all the money he earned in the saddlery. He then turned school teacher for he could teach the alphabet and perhaps the multiplication table. He now began to think of a profession and decided to study law. After two years of law study, Jackson decided to go west to the wilderness of Tennessee, and in that frontier country accomplished the feats that won for him the Presidency of the United States.



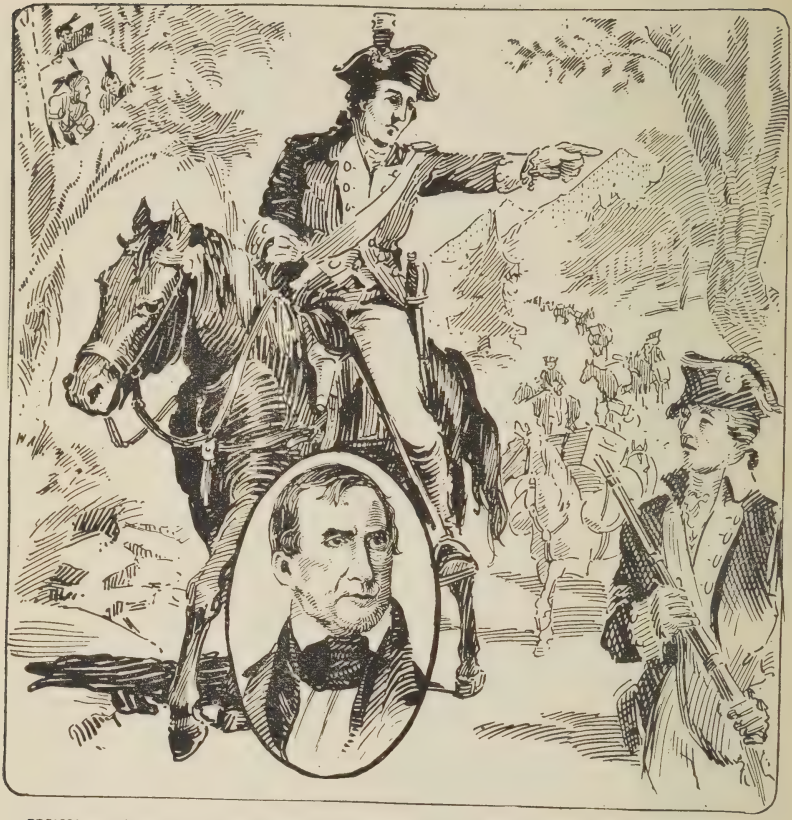
Martin Van Buren, the Tavern-Keeper's Son

THE MOTHER OF MARTIN VAN BUREN

The mother of President Van Buren was Miss Mary Hoes, a descendant of emigrants from Holland who came to America about 1680. When she married Abraham Van Buren she was a widow with three children. Mrs. Van Buren was a woman of unusual grace of manner and polish. It is said that the charming personal traits, which were so marked in the President, were inherited from his mother. He was one of the most polite and polished of men. Mary Hoes Van Buren was active and ambitious, and very fond of politics. The family were members of the Dutch Reformed Church.

THE Presidents of the United States, from Washington to Jackson, were children of the Revolution. They either took some part in the stirring scenes of our struggle for independence or as youngsters witnessed some of the important events. So linked with glorious memories, they could not but be patriotic and the people never doubted that their hearts were devoted to their country and its welfare. Martin Van Buren was the first President to be elected who was born after the close of the Revolution. The ancestors of Van Buren were among the early emigrants from Holland to New York. Among these Dutch settlers the names of Stuyvesant, Van Twiller, Kieft, Van Cortland, Van Raenselaer are quite familiar.

The father of Martin Van Buren was a farmer, and on his father's farm on the east bank of the Hudson not far from the present town of Albany, the son was born. The father was also a tavern-keeper. These were the days of the stage-coach, when railroads and steamboats were never dreamed of. The Van Buren tavern was a popular place for the weary traveler to stop for refreshments and entertainment. Young Van Buren assisted his father in making the hostelry popular with the public. One of his duties was to care for the horses and look after the comfort of the patrons. The gracious manner and the tact which were so marked in Van Buren in later years sprang from the contact which young Van Buren had with these travelers while sojourning at his father's inn. In the days of the tavern, the custom was for neighbors and travelers to meet and discuss the signs of the times and the politics of the day. There were few newspapers, and these taverns were the popular meeting place for the discussion and dissemination of the news of the day, and the son of the tavern-keeper, keen and alert, must have been an interested witness to htese political discussions. The mother of Van Buren was also of Dutch ancestry and was a woman of unusual good sense and piety. As a farmer and tavern-keeper, the father was quite prosperous, and the means of the family allowed the son to attend the best schools in the neighborhood. At fourteen years of age young Van Buren set about the study of law. He completed his studies in a prominent law office in New York, where he met the brilliant Aaron Burr, whom he learned to admire greatly. He began the practice of law in his native town and soon thereafter entered upon a political career. Thirty-four years later the tavern-keeper's son became the eighth President of the United States.



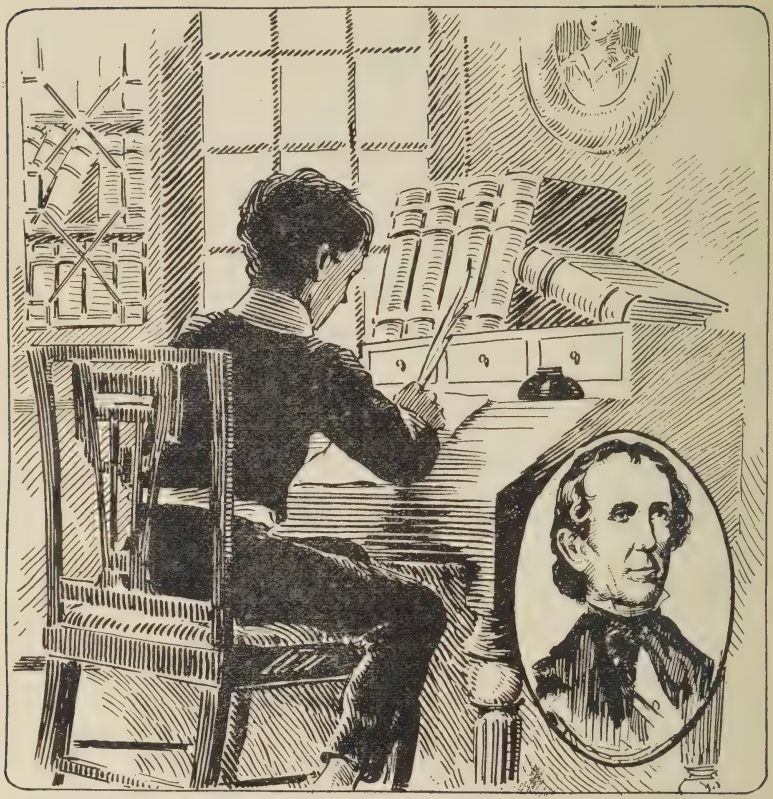
William Henry Harrison in Command of a Train of Pack-horses

THE MOTHER OF WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON

Benjamin Harrison married Miss Elizabeth Bassett, daughter of Colonel William Bassett, a relative of Martha Washington. Their youngest son, the future President, was born in 1773 in Charles County, Virginia. Mrs. Harrison was the mother of seven children, and these were left much in the care of the mother owing to the absence of the father from home to participate in public duties, for the stirring events of the Revolution were then taking place. Mrs. Harrison was absorbed in the patriotic fervor that was then sweeping through the country, and this spirit she never failed to infuse into her children upon every occasion.

WHILE George Washington was President, the Indians were committing fearful ravages on our Northwestern frontier. Young Harrison, whose father lived in Virginia and was a friend of Washington, lured by the love of adventure and moved by the sufferings of families exposed to the most horrible outrages, abandoned his medical studies in Philadelphia, and notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, entered the army, having obtained a commission of ensign from President Washington. Harrison was then nineteen years of age. Winter was setting in, the young man in form and strength was frail; and many of his friends, thinking he would be unable to endure the hardships of a winter campaign, urged him to resign his commission. He, however, rejected this advice, and crossing the country on foot to Pittsburgh, descended the Ohio to Fort Washington. The first duty assigned to him was to take command of a train of pack-horses bound to Fort Hamilton on the Missouri River, about forty miles from Fort Washington. It was a very arduous and perilous service, but it was so well performed as to command the special commendation of General St. Clair. A veteran frontiersman said of the young soldier, "I would as soon have thought of putting my wife into the service as this boy; but I have been out with him, and find those smooth cheeks are on a wise head, and that slight frame is almost as tough as my own weather-beaten carcass."

William Henry Harrison, as a youth, preferred the army to medicine. After the death of his father, Benjamin Harrison, who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, young Harrison was placed under the guardianship of Robert Morris of Philadelphia, a friend of his father and who was also a signer. Morris decided that his ward should study medicine. So he was placed in the office of Dr. Rush, a noted surgeon, also a signer. The youth of Harrison was thus surrounded with men of patriotic distinction, and when the opportunity came to also serve his country, the young student left the doctor's office for the wilderness. Harrison won great renown as an Indian fighter, and was one of the leading generals in the War of 1812. His military exploits made him a popular hero and later his countrymen elected him to the Presidency. Soon after taking office he died, and as prescribed by the Constitution, the Vice-President became President.



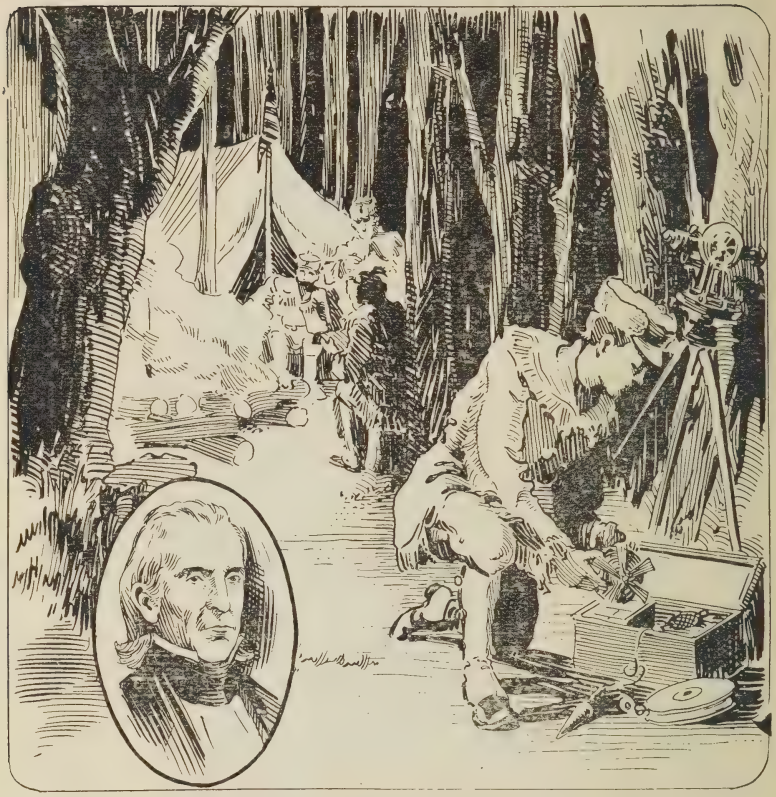
John Tyler Writing His Famous Speech on "Female Education"

THE MOTHER OF JOHN TYLER

In 1776, Judge John Tyler married Miss Mary Armistead, a beautiful culturel madam of sixteen. She became the mother of seven children. The second son was named John, who became the President. Mrs. Tyler died when she was only thirty-six. Judge Tyler never married again. He was deeply devoted to his wife, and before he married her he had sung her praises in verse, for he was a poet of real merit, and after her death he continued to do so. She was a Christian, a member of the Episcopal Church. Her son united with the same church.

VIRGINIA has been called the "Mother of Presidents." Seven of the Presidents were born in that state. The father of John Tyler was one of the most distinguished men of his day in Virginia, and the future president enjoyed in his youthful days all the advantages which wealth and parental distinction could confer. The mother was very desirous that her son should follow in the footsteps of his distinguished father and take an honored place in the history of his state. As the mother sat at the window of her home one evening the rays of the moon came into the room through the branches of an old willow, and the child, then an infant in arms, catching a glimpse of the moon, eagerly stretched out his hands and cried bitterly for the moon. "This child," said the smiling mother, "is destined to be a president of the United States, his wishes fly so high." As he grew up to the school-boy age he was the favorite of the household and the father's ideal.

In early boyhood John Tyler attended an "old field school," kept by a learned Scotchman, named McMurdo who was a great tyrant, and on occasions would handle his pupils with roughness which they resented. At the age of eleven years young Tyler was one of the ring leaders in a rebellion against the school master. The scholars attempted to tie McMurdo to the floor. He resisted stoutly till he saw John Tyler active in the matter. Then in imitation of the great Roman, he exclaimed, "Et tu Brute," and ceased to resist. On complaining afterwards to Judge Tyler, the father, the indignant school master was met with the reply, "Sic Semper Tyrannus." John Tyler at college showed a strong interest in ancient history—a taste which he shared with his father, who never tired commenting upon the great and glorious men of the past, and holding up the mirror of their virtues for the emulation of his sons. The future president was also fond of poetry and music, and like Thomas Jefferson, was a skilled performer on the violin. At the early age of twelve years, John Tyler entered William and Mary College and graduated five years later with high honors. His commencement address upon "Female Education" was a notable performance for a man so young, and won for him wide renown. After a distinguished career at the Bar of Virginia, John Tyler was elected Vice-President, and upon the death of President William Henry Harrison, became President, according to the provisions of the Constitution.



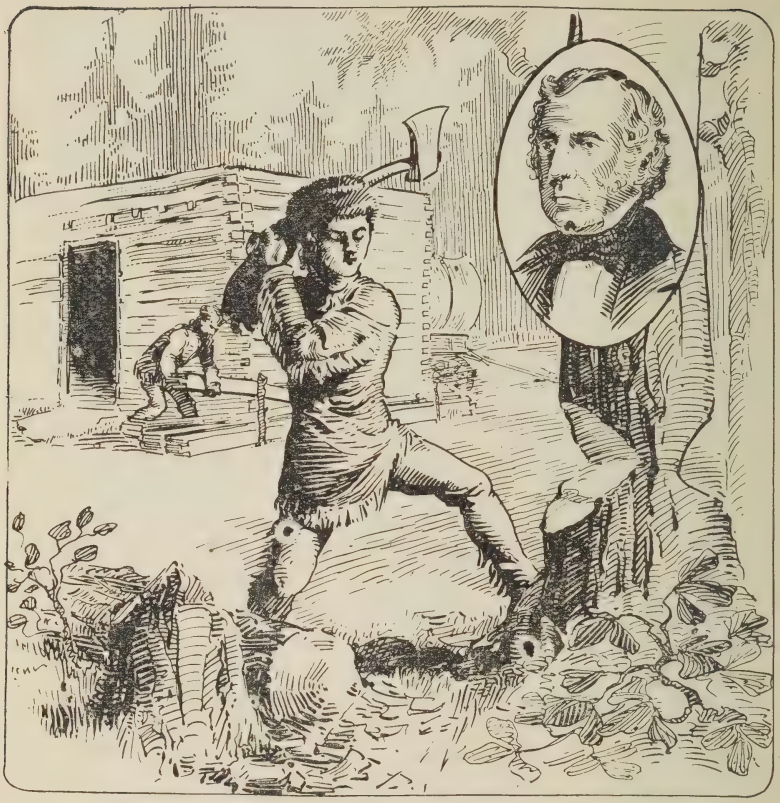
James K. Polk Assisting His Father as Surveyor

THE MOTHER OF JAMES K. POLK

In 1794, Samuel Polk married Miss Jane Knox, a daughter of Captain James Knox, who fought for the cause of the Colonists in the American Revolution. He was of Scotch descent. Mrs. Polk was the mother of ten children. She was a Presbyterian, and her son remembered his early religious training throughout his entire life. When President he absolutely refused to perform any official duties on the Sabbath. He spent his last day in office as President by attending services in the First Presbyterian Church in Washington. The mother out-lived her distinguished son.

THE Polk family lived in the western part of North Carolina until the year 1806; then Samuel Polk, the father of the future President, with his wife and children, emigrated some two or three hundred miles further west to the rich valley of the Tennessee. Samuel Polk was a plain, unpretentious farmer, but of an enterprising character, and, attracted by the glorious accounts of the fertile valleys of Tennessee, he determined to move thither and achieve a competence for himself. Having purchased a quantity of land Samuel Polk employed himself in its cultivation; following, at intervals, the occupation of surveyor. In the hard toil of a new farm in the wilderness, James K. Polk spent the early years of his childhood and his youth. Not only did he assist his father in the management of the farm, but was also his almost constant companion in his surveying excursions. They were frequently absent for weeks together, treading the dense forests and traversing the rough cane-brakes which then covered the face of the country, and exposed to all the changes of the weather, and the dangers and the vicissitudes of a life in the woods. On these occasions, it was the duty of James to take care of the pack-horses and the camp equipage, and to prepare the scanty and frugal meals of the surveying party.

Very early in life James developed a taste for reading and expressed the strongest desire to obtain a liberal education. His mother's training had rendered him methodical in his habits, had taught him punctuality and industry, and had inspired him with lofty principles of morality. James, in the common schools, rapidly became proficient in all the common branches of an English education. His health was frail, and his father, fearing that he might not be able to endure a sedentary life, placed him with a merchant with the view of fitting him for commercial pursuits. After a few weeks James returned home. After several years in college, Polk entered the office of Felix Grundy at Nashville to study law. While at Nashville Polk met Andrew Jackson, the gallant defender of New Orleans, and already occupying a proud position among the great men of the nation. General Jackson was warmly attached to Polk and always took a deep interest in his political advancement. James K. Polk became a successful lawyer and was elected Governor of Tennessee, which office was a step upward to the Presidency.



Zachary Taylor Helping His Father Build His Frontier Home

THE MOTHER OF ZACHARY TAYLOR

When Richard Taylor was thirty-five years of age, he married Miss Sarah Strother, a charming young lady, only nineteen years of age. They began housekeeping on a plantation in Orange County, Virginia. She gave birth to eight children. Zachary was the third child born. Sarah Taylor was only twenty-four when her husband took her to Kentucky to live. In the absence of her husband, she taught her children how to defend themselves against the Indians who were then lurking in the vicinity of her home. She made a happy home for her husband and children under the most unfavorable conditions.

THE father of Zachary Taylor was a Virginian, a distinguished patriot and soldier of the Revolution. When Zachary was a youth, his father, with his wife and two other children, emigrated to Kentucky, where he settled in the pathless wilderness, a few miles out from the present city of Louisville. He was one of the first settlers of that region. Upon arrival there, a log-cabin had to be built and young Taylor, handy with the axe, helped his father to build his frontier home. The surroundings of the Taylor family were exciting. Bands of hostile Indians lurked about the neighborhood and were always ready to fall upon the settlements. A number of these wild men were known to be in the woods not far distant from the school-house where young Taylor attended. A valiant neighbor taught her boys how to trail Indians and how to save themselves if attacked by more than one warrior at a time.

The father had been a brave soldier in Virginia, and it was with pride that the mother listened to the stories of the old war told by her husband to the young Zachary. This home influence and the perils of the neighborhood made the lad venturesome and brave. He went with his brothers and with other young companions on dangerous hunting expeditions; took wild rides through the woods and across the open prairies to the east and south of his home; and in the springtime, when the water was still cold, he swam the broad and swift Ohio. Zachary worked at every variety of farm work. He worked with axe and fire and plow to clear up and extend the cultivated land. He became skilled in yoking the oxen, harnessing the horses, driving the team, holding the scythe and the rake and the hoe. He was taught to make and to mend, to plant and to sow, to plan, to reap, and to harvest, to house and to feed and to water the stock and to kindle the fire on the hearth. It was this daily drill on the frontier farm that prepared young Taylor for the military duties that came to him in after life. At twenty-four years of age, his father obtained for Zachary a commission of lieutenant in the United States Army. By faithful application to duty, he was soon promoted to camtain, and after many successful campaigns against the Indians, he achieved wide military fame. Taylor became the hero of the Mexican War and later was elected President.



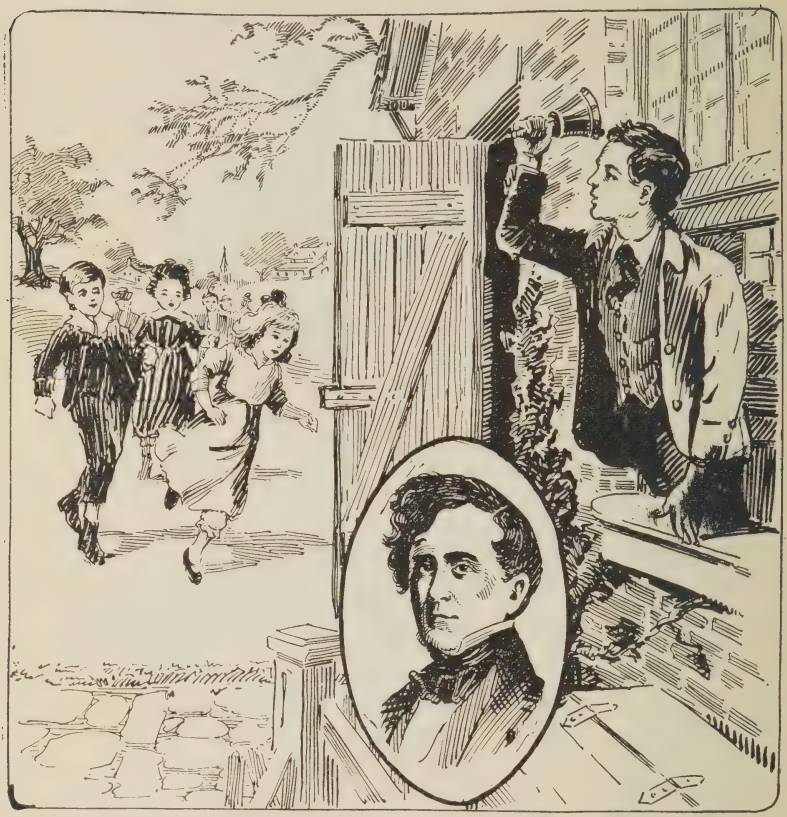
Millard Fillmore as an Apprentice to a Wool-Carder

THE MOTHER OF MILLARD FILLMORE

After Nathaniel Fillmore had built his log cabin in the wilderness in Cayuga County, New York, he journeyed to Bennington, Vermont, his former home, and claimed as his bride Miss Phebe Millard, the daughter of a prominent physician of Bennington. When he returned, he took his young bride with him to share his log-cabin home. He was twenty-six, and his bride only sixteen. She became the mother of nine children, Millard being the second born. At the time of his birth, his father walked seven miles through the forest, with snow half knee-deep, to procure the services of a physician. When he returned, he found the baby rocking in a sap-trough for want of a better cradle.

THE father of Millard Fillmore was a soldier in the Revolution and fought as lieutenant under General Stark at Bennington. He was a farmer and moved to Cayuga County, New York, where his son Millard was born. Having lost all his property by a bad title to one of the military lots he had purchased, the father removed to Erie County, where he cultivated a small farm with his own hands. The narrow means of the father deprived Millard of an advantage of education beyond what was afforded by the imperfect and ill-taught schools of the county. Books were scarce and dear, and at the age of fifteen, young Fillmore had read but little except his common school books and the Bible. At that period he was sent to the then wilds of Livingston County to learn the clothier trade. He remained there about four months, and was then placed with another person to pursue the same business and wool-carding in the town where his father lived. In those days there were no large woolen mills with intricate machinery to do the carding. The work was done by hand with crude tools or combs. In this village there was formed a library which gave young Fillmore the first means of acquiring general knowledge through books. He improved the opportunity thus offered. The thirst for knowledge soon became insatiate, and every leisure moment was spent in reading. Four years were passed in this way, working at his trade, and storing his mind with the contents of books of history, biography and travels.

At the age of nineteen, the young wool-carder fortunately made the acquaintance of a Judge Wood, who advised him to quit his trade and study law. He also offered to give him a place in his office, to advance money to defray his expenses, and wait until success in business should furnish the means of re-payment. The offer was accepted. The apprentice bought his time and began the study of law. He also taught school three months in the year, and acquired the means of partially supporting himself. Later the law student entered a law office in Buffalo and became a member of the bar of that city. His talents, integrity and devotion to business soon won him the confidence of his neighbors and he entered public life, and advanced step by step until he was elected Vice-President of the United States. On the death of President Taylor, he became President as provided by the Constitution.



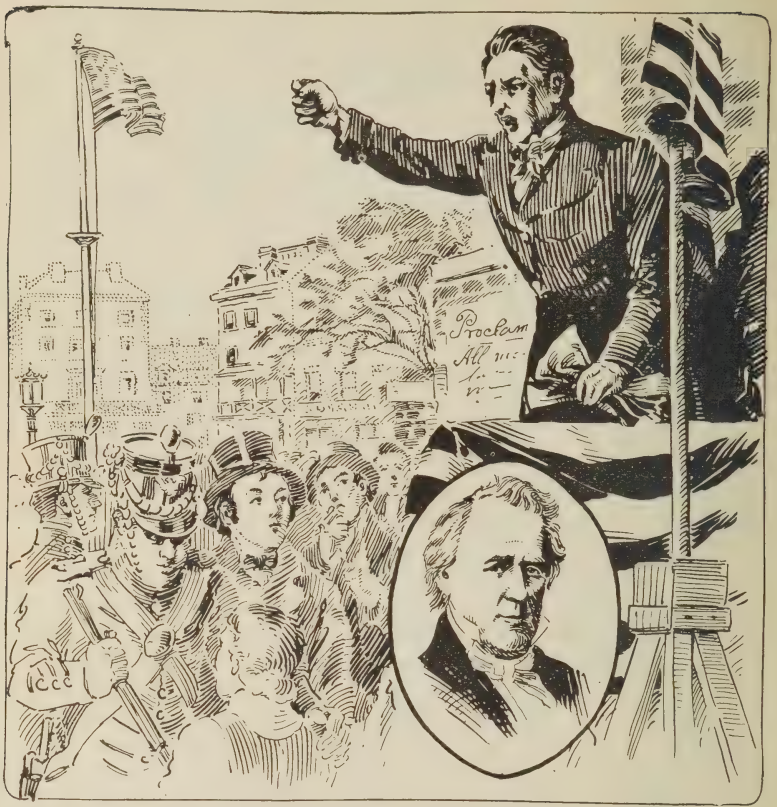
Franklin Pierce as a Volunteer School Teacher

THE MOTHER OF FRANKLIN PIERCE

After returning from the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Pierce bought a farm of one hundred and fifty acres, and then married Miss Elizabeth Andrews. His wife lived only one year. He married again: his bride was Miss Anna Kendrick, who became the mother of Franklin Pierce. Anna Kendrick Pierce was light-hearted and gay. She was fond of having a good time. Cares she carried lightly. She seemed to take delight in attracting the attention of others by some freakish innovation in the manner of her dress. She was plump and pretty, and was known to appear in public garbed in a flashy short gown, displaying comely ankles, encircled with red ribbons.

THE father of Franklin Pierce was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and was one of the early builders of America. He settled in the State of New Hampshire, then sparsely settled, and with his own strong arm hewed out a home in the wilderness. His great enthusiasm for the new government won him the esteem of his neighbors, and they elected him to many important public offices. His upright character and abilities gave him great influence in the secluded region where he dwelt. The important political questions which confronted the new country at that early period became the subject of earnest discussion in the home of the father of the future President. Young Franklin Pierce was an interested listener, and from these discussions imbibed his first knowledge of political questions. The father observed the growing interest of his son in political affairs, and determined that he should have an education, for the father realized the serious handicap his own lack of education had been to him. In his youth, educational opportunities were very rare, and his days were spent in winning an existence from the newly settled region. There were also eight children in the family—a number sufficiently large to keep a father busy to provide for.

The son Franklin was sent to local schools until he was ready to enter Bowdoin College at the age of sixteen. At school he won alike the love of the old and young. The boys on the playground loved him. His teachers loved him. The neighbors looked upon him with pride and affection. He was always speaking kind words and doing kind deeds. During one of his winter vacations, young Pierce taught a country school, which was in want of a teacher, and yet could not pay a sufficient salary. He remembered those less fortunate than himself and was eager to share his good fortune with those who also were struggling for knowledge and success. Years later, many of those who attended this country school while young Pierce was teacher, spoke their gratitude to this volunteer teacher, who had then become President. In thirty-three years from the time Franklin Pierce was a volunteer teacher, he was inaugurated President of the United States. In this comparatively short period the courteous farmer boy from the New Hampshire hills became the chief executive of a great nation—an achievement made possible by the Constitution which guarantees to all an equal chance to success.



James Buchanan Appealing for Volunteers to Defend Baltimore

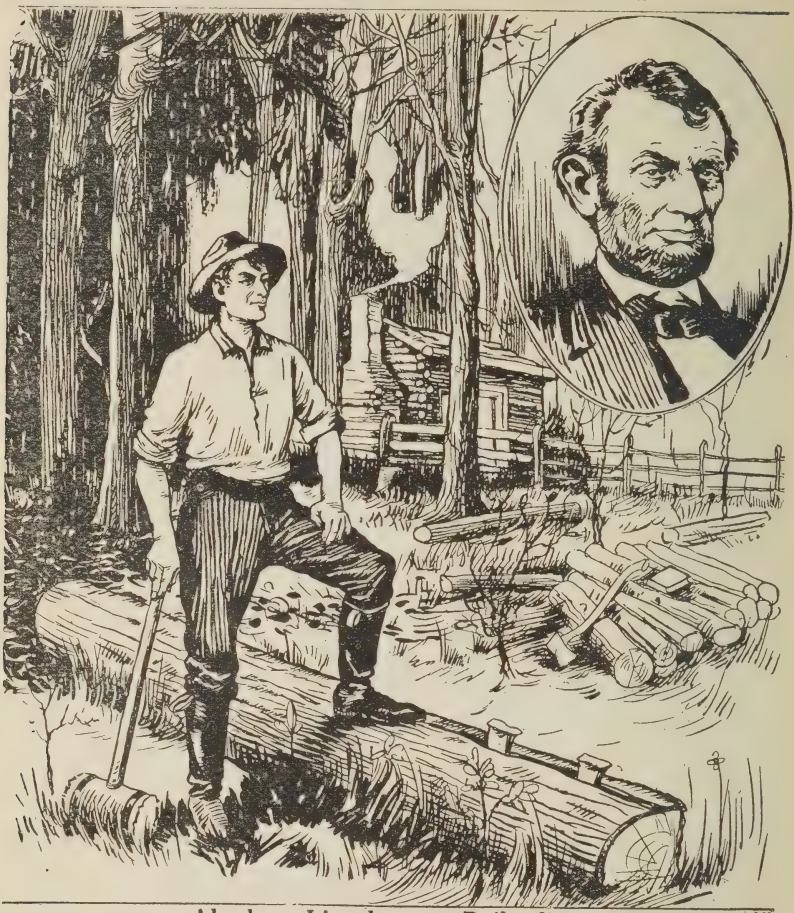
THE MOTHER OF JAMES BUCHANAN

James Buchanan, the father of the fifteenth President of the United States, when twenty-seven years of age, married Miss Elizabeth Speer. His bride was twenty-one. She gave birth to eleven children. Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan were devout Christians of the Presbyterian faith. The President thus spoke of his mother: "She was a sincere and devout Christian from the time of my earliest recollection. She was a woman of great firmness of character and bore the afflictions of her later life with Christian philosophy. She died in the calm and firm assurance that she was going home to her Father and God."

JAMES BUCHANAN was born in a small frontier town at the foot of the eastern ridge of the Alleghenies, in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. His father was a native of the north of Ireland, a poor young man who had emigrated to America with little property save his own strong arms. Shortly after his arrival in this country he married the daughter of an industrious farmer, and with his young bride, plunged into the wilderness, staked his claim, reared his log hut, opened a clearing with his axe, and settled down to make a home in the new country. In this secluded home, James was born.

James Buchanan had an unusual mother. Speaking of her in later years he said, "My mother, considering her limited opportunities in early life, was a remarkable woman. The daughter of a country farmer, engaged in household employment from early life until after my father's death, she yet found time to read much and to reflect deeply on what she read. She had a great fondness for poetry, and could repeat with ease all the passages in her favorite authors which struck her fancy. She would argue with her sons and excite their ambition by presenting to them in glowing colors men who had been useful to their country or their kind, as objects of imitation Under Providence, I attribute any little distinction I may have acquired in the world to the blessing which He conferred upon me in granting me such a mother."

Having graduated from Dickinson College, at Carlisle, young Buchanan commenced the study of law at Lancaster, Penna., where he became a leader of the Bar. In 1812, just after the young man had entered upon the practice of law, war broke out between England and America. Washington was sacked and burned, and the British were threatening Baltimore. The flame of patriotism touched the young lawyer. A public meeting was held in Lancaster for the purpose of adopting measures to obtain volunteers to march to the defense of Baltimore. Buchanan addressed the meeting and was the first to volunteer. A company of dragoons was formed which marched to Baltimore. Such opportunities to serve does this country, under its Constitution, offer to loyal and industrious youth, that within forty years from the time this young lawyer was marching to the defense of Baltimore as a private in a company of dragoons, James Buchanan was elected Chief Magistrate of a nation of thirty millions of people.



Abraham Lincoln as a Rail-splitter

THE MOTHER OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Thomas Lincoln married Nancy Hanks in Kentucky, where Abraham was born in a rude log-cabin near Hodgensville. Shortly after the Lincolns moved to Indiana, Nancy Hanks Lincoln died. As the end drew near, she laid her hand on Abraham's young head, and gave him her last message, calling upon him to be good to his father and sister, and calling upon all to be good to one another and worship God.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was born in Hardin, now Larue County, Kentucky, February 12, 1809. Every school boy knows about the extreme poverty of Lincoln's parents. When Lincoln was seven years old, the family moved from Kentucky to the backwoods of Indiana. Thomas Lincoln, the father of Abraham, did not find very good farming land in Indiana, and in 1830 he decided to make his home in Illinois. The household goods were loaded into covered wagons drawn by oxen and Abraham Lincoln took his place as driver beside the oxen. There was no open road to their new home, and the route lay through a dense wilderness. Upon their arrival there, a log cabin was built, Abraham assisting his father in the building, for he was a very strong youth and could use the axe with great force. While a youth in Indiana, Abraham was quite a rail-splitter. Dennis Hanks, a friend of Lincoln's youth said, speaking of the boy's strength: "My, how he would chop! His axe would flash and bite into the sugar-tree or sycamore, and down it would come. If you heard him fellin' trees in a clearin' you would say that there were three men at work, the way the trees fell." Lincoln earned his home-spun clothes by splitting rails for his neighbors, so many rails for so many yards of cloth. When Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency, and many times during the campaign, rails which Lincoln split were carried about to evoke enthusiasm. Lincoln declared that he could not say that he split the particular rails on exhibition, but that he split many just as good.

Lincoln early in life was eager to make speeches. He would commit to memory and repeat all the poems and speeches in the books he could find. He would walk miles to borrow a single book. On one occasion Lincoln pulled corn for three days to pay a man named Crawford for a "Life of Washington" he had borrowed and which was injured by a rain one night while Lincoln was sleeping. While Lincoln was a storekeeper, one day a man drew up in front of the store with a wagon and asked Lincoln if he would buy an old barrel. To oblige the traveler Lincoln bought the barrel and paid him a dollar for it. When the barrel was emptied, a complete edition of Blackstone's "Commentaries" was found. Lincoln eagerly read these famous law books and his ambition to be a lawyer was greatly stimulated. The finding of these books may have started Lincoln on the climb upward to the Presidency of the United States.



Andrew Johnson as an Apprentice to a Tailor

THE MOTHER OF ANDREW JOHNSON

Jacob Johnson was the father and Mary McDonough, the mother of Andrew Johnson. The father died from exhaustion after rescuing a friend from drowning after his canoe had upset. After the death of Mr. Johnson, Andrew and his mother lived under great difficulties because of their extreme poverty. The privations of his widowed-mother were never forgotten by the son. He keenly remembered how she had cared for him in her poverty during his early childhood, and throughout his life he cared for her to the utmost of his ability. The son shared with her his destiny and fortune. As honor and fame and wealth came to Andrew Johnson, he never outgrew his mother.

THE early life of Andrew Johnson is but a record of poverty, destitution and friendlessness. He was born in North Carolina, of parents who belonged to the class of the "poor whites" of the South. They were in such circumstances that they could not confer the slightest advantages of education upon their child. When Andrew was five years of age his father accidentally lost his life while trying to save a friend from drowning. Until ten years of age Andrew was a ragged boy about the streets, supported by the labor of his mother, who obtained her living with her own hands. He then never having attended a school one day, and being unable to read or write, was apprenticed to a tailor in his native town. A benevolent gentleman of Raleigh was in the habit of going to the tailor's shop occasionally and reading to the boys at work there. He often read from the speeches of distinguished statesmen. Andrew, who was endowed with a mind of more than ordinary native ability, became much interested in these speeches; his ambition was roused, and he was inspired with a strong desire to learn to read.

He accordingly applied himself to the alphabet, and with the assistance of some of his fellow-workmen, learned his letters. He then called upon the gentleman to borrow the book of speeches. The owner, pleased with his zeal, not only gave him the book, but assisted him in learning to combine the letters into words. Under such difficulties, Andrew pursued his studies, spending usually ten or twelve hours at work in the shop, and then robbing himself of rest and recreation to devote such time as he could to reading. When eighteen years of age Andrew, taking his mother with him, removed to Greenville, a small town in East Tennessee, where he resumed his work as a journeyman tailor, and there married a young woman of very estimable character, and who was so decidedly in advance of him in point of education that she became his teacher in reading, writing and arithmetic. She read to him as he plied the needle on the bench, and in the evening instructed him in other branches. The young tailor advanced rapidly, and became a fluent speaker with great influence among the working class. When only twenty-two he was elected mayor of his town. Step by step he climbed from one position to another until he was nominated and elected Vice-President at the same time Lincoln was elected President. Upon the death of Lincoln, Johnson succeeded to the Presidency as prescribed by the Constitution of the United States.



Ulysses S. Grant as a Skilled Horseman at West Point

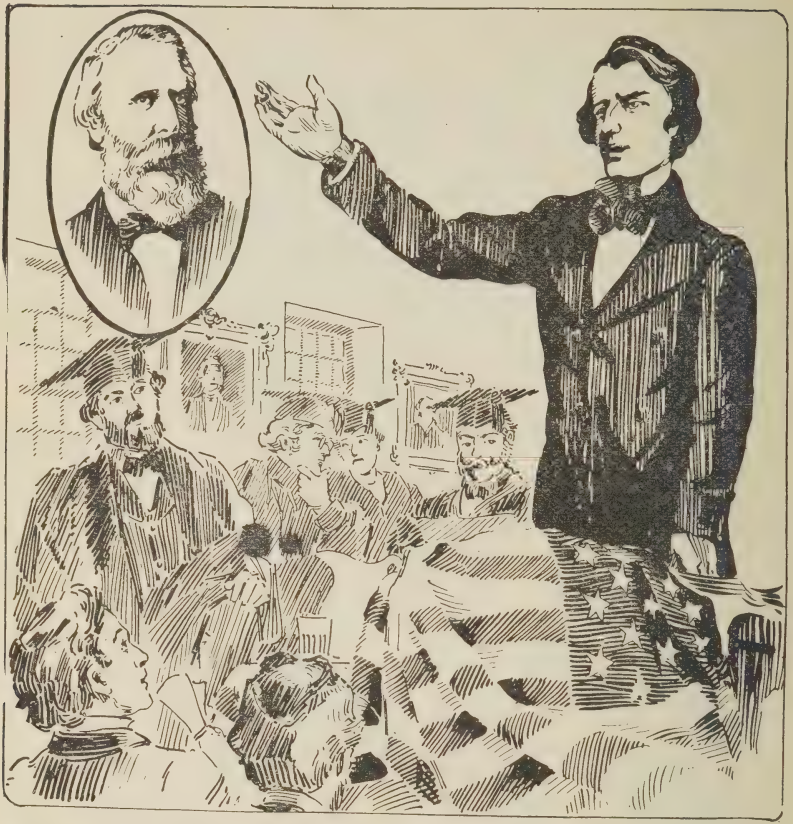
THE MOTHER OF ULYSSES S. GRANT

The father of Ulysses, Jesse Root Grant, married Hannah Simpson, who had come with her father from Pennsylvania to Clermont County, Ohio. They began housekeeping in a little cabin home near the Ohio River. After he became a cadet at West Point, Grant wrote to his mother: "I seem alone in the world without my mother. There have been so many ways in which you have advised me in the quiet of home, that I cannot tell you how much I miss you. I am looking forward with hope to have you spared to share with me in any advancement I may make." General Grant's mother lived to enjoy the honors, military and civil, that came to her distinguished son.

JESSE GRANT, the father of General Grant, was the owner of a tannery at Georgetown, Ohio, and he had planned to have the son join him in the tannery, but the years of boyish work had given Ulysses a great dislike for this occupation. As a lad, he would drive a team, or haul logs, or carry a message—anything in preference to breaking the bark into the hopper or cleaning the hides in the beam-house. When the father asked him as to his plan for life, Ulysses said he would like to get an education. The father suggested West Point, and the son accepted. At West Point was the National Military Academy from which so many young men had graduated, many of whom, after a brief season in the Army, had become leaders in civil life. The educational advantages of such training as West Point afforded was very great. A few months later Grant was on his way to West Point.

Ulysses Grant was not a brilliant student at West Point, but there was one branch, however, in which he was an acknowledged master—horsemanship. As a boy Grant had a passion for horses, and was on the back of one as often and as long as possible. A riding-master was appointed for the Academy and proper provision made for mounting the cadets. The boyish fondness for the horse still dominated, and he soon was conceded to be the most accomplished rider at the post. In the presence of General Winfield Scott and the official board of visitors, Grant made a record jump in which the horse leaped a bar held high over the head of the soldier who rested it against the wall. On another occasion the ring-master placed the leaping-bar higher than a man's head, and called out "Cadet Grant." A clean-faced, slender, blue-eyed young twenty pounds, dashed from the ranks on a powerfully built chestnut-sorrel horse and gallope ddown the opposite side of the hall. As he turned at the farther end and came into the stretch across which the bar was placed, the horse increased his pace, and measuring his strides for the great leap before him, bounded into the air and cleared the bar, carrying his rider as if the man and beast had been welded together. The spectators were speechless.

After graduation Grant was assigned to duty at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis. There began the military career that reached its summit when General Lee surrendered his sword at Appomattox. The military achievements of General Grant made him a popular hero and he was elected President at the first election after the close of the Civil War.



Rutherford B. Hays Delivering the Valedictory Address at College

THE MOTHER OF RUTHERFORD B. HAYES

On September the nineteenth, 1813, Rutherford Hayes married Miss Sophia Birchard. Mr. Hayes died when only thirty-five years old, and three months after his death, his widow gave birth to a son, naming him after the father and including her maiden name. This child became the nineteenth President, and to this young widowed mother was assigned the task of his entire training and education. She was not left in poverty, but in comfortable circumstances, and in addition to this, she was a good manager.

THE father of President Hays was the owner of a small store in the town of Brattleborough, Vermont, and was fairly prosperous in his business. He, however, had heard of the rich lands that had been opened up in Ohio, and he resolved to emigrate thither soon after the close of the War of 1812. The journey from Vermont to Ohio in that day, when there were neither canals, steamers nor railways, was a very serious affair. Having disposed of his property in Brattleborough, Mr. Hayes and his family set out upon their Western journey in a covered wagon in which were stored all the household goods and nearly all of the food they expected to need on the way.

Upon the arrival of the Hayes family at Delaware, Ohio, Mr. Hayes concluded to enter into business in the village. His business prospered. A few years later, Mr. Hayes died, less than three months before the birth of the future President. The child was so feeble at birth that he was not expected to live beyond a month or two at most. As the months went by, he grew weaker and weaker so that the neighbors were in the habit of inquiring from time to time "if Mrs. Hayes's baby died last night." On one occasion a neighbor who was on familiar terms with the family, after alluding to the boy's big head and the mother's assiduous care of him, said in a bantering way to her, "That's right! Stick to him. You have got him along so far, and I shouldn't wonder if he would really come to something yet." "You need not laugh," said Mrs. Hayes, "you wait and see. You can't tell but I shall make him President of the United States yet."

When seven years of age, young Hayes attended the schools of the neighborhood. He was devoted to his studies. He was always waiting at the school house door when it opened, and never late in returning to his seat at recess. At the age of sixteen, he entered Kenyon College and graduated four years later. College days to young Hayes were very happy days. He took an active interest in debating clubs, and became a forceful speaker, and was chosen valedictorian of his class. His theme was "College Life." It is said to have been one of the best orations ever spoken at the college. After graduation, Rutherford B. Hayes studied law, practiced the profession many years, served with distinction in the Civil War, held many public offices in his native state of Ohio, and in 1876 was elected President of the United States.



James A. Garfield as a Driver on the Tow-Path of a Canal

THE MOTHER OF JAMES A. GARFIELD

Abraham Garfield, the father, and Eliza Ballou, the mother of James A. Garfield, were playmates in a village in New Hamoshire. When Eliza was still quite young, her mother, then a widow, moved to Ohio. This separated the little Ballou girl from young Abraham, but he soon followed, after having served out his apprenticeship. He renewed his courtship, and when she was eighteen and he was nineteen they were married. Abram Garfield died at thirty-three, having lost his life from exposure in fighting a forest fire that threatened his home. His widow was left alone to support four children. She was a very industrious woman, and lived to see her son inaugurated President.

THE surroundings of James Abram Garfield at the time of his birth and early childhood were as humble and rude as backwoods life could make them. His father and mother lived in a little log cabin, in a small clearing made by cutting away the primitive forest. The front yard was crowded with fresh stumps of giant trees, and the little patch of ground they called "the farm" did not include over two acres open to the sunlight. With scarcely utensils sufficient to cook the most simple food, with rough tables, rude chairs, and an open fire-place with a floor of rough slabs with peep holes for windows, logs for doors, and a little brook in the woods for a well, with wild game and wheat or corn cracked in a hand mortar for their meals, his parents struggled on day by day in the close battle for bare life. Four years after the death of James's father, a school house was built a mile and a half away which he attended with his two sisters. The three R's, with spelling and geography, were the only branches taught; but as soon as the boy could read he devoured every book that came within his reach. He had a most remarkable memory, and would often commit long passages of poetry. The trees about the house he named after noted Indian Chiefs, and while yet a lad, would climb a high ledge or rock in the neighborhood and deliver long harrangues to imaginary audiences. However, an insatiable longing to become a sailor seized the lad, and after some time his mother gave her consent to his trying one trip on Lake Erie. After walking the entire distance to Cleveland, he found that a sailor's life was far different from what he had read in the books. While in Cleveland, he met his uncle who was the owner of a boat on the Ohio Canal. Through the kindness of his uncle and cousins young James obtained the opportunity to drive horses attached to one of the boats used by the owners to transport coal from the mines to Cleveland. The wages were ten dollars a month and board. He was soon promoted to the position of steersman, but exposure brought on an illness and his earnings went for medicines and medical attendance. James was persuaded by his mother to resume his studies; thereupon, he entered an academy near his home where he earned his living by working in a carpenter shop in the village. While a student at Hiram College, Garfield defrayed the expenses of the tuition by acting as janitor, lighting the fires, sweeping the floors, and ringing the bell.



Chester A. Arthur Accompanying Father in His Travels as Preacher

THE MOTHER OF CHESTER A. ARTHUR

Before coming to the United States, William Arthur, the father of Chester Alan Arthur, fell in love with Miss Melvina Stone, the daughter of a Canadian Methodist preacher. Miss Stone's father strenuously opposed the marriage, so the young people eloped, crossed the border-line into the United States and were married by a Methodist preacher. Mrs. Arthur was an attractive and cultured woman. The father, a Baptist minister, received only a meagre salary, and the parents denied themselves many comforts and necessities that their son might enter college and enjoy the advantages of a higher education.

IN 1818 a penniless lad about eighteen years of age named William Arthur crossed the Atlantic from Ireland and settled in Canada. After his marriage, the young man decided to become a Baptist preacher. He was installed as pastor of a small Baptist church which worshipped in an old barn at Fairfield, Vermont, to which place William Arthur moved from Canada. His salary was but $330 per annum, and he was obliged to work in the shop or field a part of the time in order to defray his expenses. He lived in a log cabin with one large room, two small rooms, a porch for a summer kitchen and a garret. All the furniture was of rude construction, and many of the articles were the products of Mr. Arthur's own skill and invention. With a slab for a book-shelf, an old rocker for an easy-chair, the kitchen for his study, and the Bible and two or three Commentaries for a library, the preacher began his work.

In this secluded quarter of the land, just across the border-line, and in this rude cabin, Chester A. Arthur was born. When the child was a year old, Mr. Arthur moved from the town, and for twenty years following was the pastor of many different churches and made his home in many different places. During these years, the minister, by industry and close economy, gathered together quite a library. From these books Chester acquired much knowledge with the assistance of his father. He also attended school in the rude school houses wherever they were to be found in the course of his father's travels. Chester entered Union College, Schenectady, when he was fifteen years of age. While here he was unable to receive much support from his father and was obliged to spend a portion of his college years in teaching school in country towns, and while instructing others during the day, to keep up his college studies during the evening. As the system of compelling the teacher to board a day or two in turn at every scholar's home was then a custom in the country, Chester found many uncomfortable boarding-places and with the result that his studies were interfered with. However, after many hardships, Chester A. Arthur graduated with high honors. Some years later he became a leading lawyer with a large practice in New York City. In 1880 he was nominated for Vice-President and elected with James A. Garfield. Upon the death of Garfield, Arthur became President in accordance with the Constitution of the United States.



Grover Cleveland as a Clerk in a Grocery-store

THE MOTHER OF GROVER CLEVELAND

While engaged in teaching in Baltimore, Rev. Richard F. Cleveland, met Miss Anne Neal, who became his bride in 1829. After marriage, he took his bride to his New England home, where he was serving as the pastor of a Presbyterian church. Mrs. Cleveland was the mother of nine children. Grover Cleveland never got away from the influence of his mother and his home. His mother died just prior to his election as the governor of New York, and on the day of the election he wrote to his brother, "Do you know that if mother were alive, I would feel so much safer? I have always thought her prayers had much to do with my success." When Mr. Cleveland was inaugurated President of the United States he took the oath of office on a little pocked Bible given to him by his mother when he was a boy.

REV. RICHARD F. CLEVELAND, the father of Grover Cleveland, was called to the pastorate of the Presbyterial church at Caldwell, New Jersey, then, as now an important village near Newark. In the parsonage attached to this modest church, the son was born. He was named for the predecessor of his father, who for many years had been the pastor of the same congregation, the Rev. Stephen Grover. When Grover was four years old, his father accepted the pastorate of the Presbyterian church at Fayetteville, New York, a small village situated in what was then a pioneer region of Onondaga County. The settlement of central New York had only fairly begun, and Syracuse was then little more than a village. The task of reaching the new pastorate was a difficult one, so that it was only after many days of weary travel by river, canal, and wagon that the Cleveland family, then numbering, in addition to the father and mother, three daughters and three sons, reached its destination. Like all ministers in those days, the salary was small and the allowance meagre. By shrewd management, with a salary of only $600 a year, the family were able to get along fairly well, so that there was no poverty in the Cleveland home.

Before leaving Fayetteville, Grover, then fourteen years old, had taken a place in a grocery-store, where he was able to earn $50 a year, which sum enabled him to attend an academy. After the death of his father, Grover obtained a position as bookkeeper in the Institution for the Blind in New York City, his older brother William being the principal male teacher there. It was necessary for the boys to work in order to support their mother, who was now a widow and living near Utica, where the father died while pastor. Grover, by this time, had decided to become a lawyer. He went to Buffalo where his uncle hired him to assist in revising a Herd Book which the farmer-uncle had published. This remuneration made it possible for the young man to remain in Buffalo and study law. After admission to the Bar, Grover Cleveland gradually reached a high eminence in his profession. He was elected District Attorney, then Sheriff, then Mayor, then Governor. He performed the duties of Governor with such distinction that he became a national figure, and was nominated and elected President, thirty-three years after he gave up his employment as a grocery salesman—a notable achievement under the Constitution of our country.



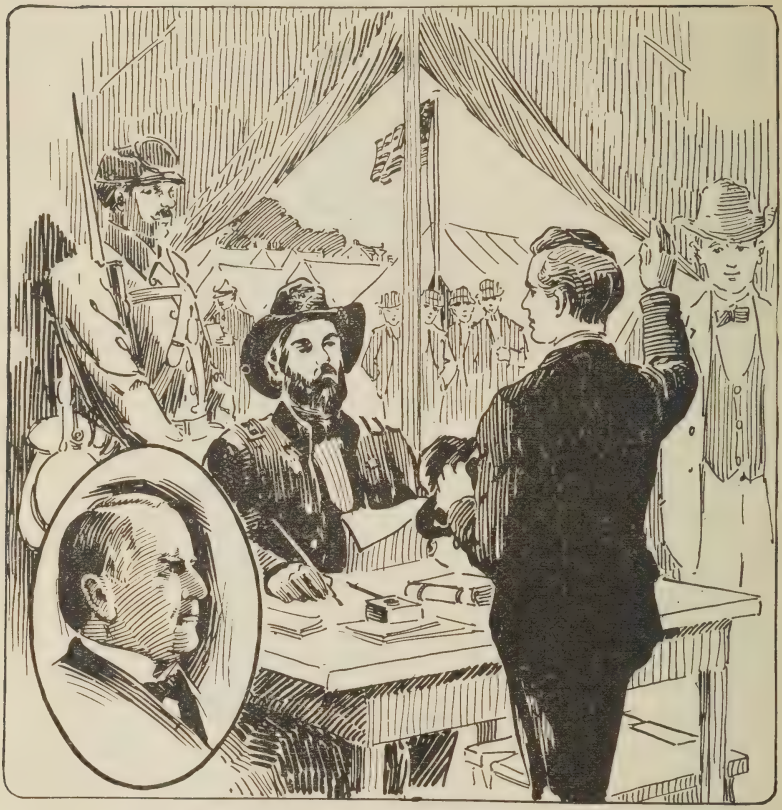
Benjamin Harrison as a Boy Making His First Political Speech

THE MOTHER OF BENJAMIN HARRISON

John Scott Harrison was the third son of President William Henry Harrison. He married Miss Elizabeth Irwin, of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.. These were the parents of Benjamin Harrison. The mother died when Benjamin was a mere boy. Among his earliest recollections was that of seeing his mother, when the hour of retirement had come, fold up her knitting, say "good-night" to the family, and withdraw by herself for prayer. This was her regular custom. Every Sunday the children gathered in their mother's room to hear her read Bible stories to them. Benjamin Harrison always had pleasant recollections of his boyhood home. In after years, he would go there for change and rest and enjoyed going about the old farm with gun and rod as he had done in his boyhood.

WHEN Benjamin Harirson was about ten years old, his grandfather, William Henry Harrison, was elected President. The campaign of 1840 was a very exciting one and the boy witnessed many of the stirring scenes incident to it. It was the beginning of political mass-meetings and the popular campaign songs. The old log cabin in which the candidate lived was made the war-cry. The boy Ben was born in this log cabin while his mother was visiting his grandfather. These exciting scenes made a strong impression upon the boy Ben and from that campaign on the lad became interested in politics. Four years later he made his first speech on behalf of the Whig candidate and every presidential election thereafter saw the young man an active participant. The father of young Ben was a well-to-do farmer who lived at North Bend, Ohio, on a farm given him by his father. The boy did his share of work on the farm, carrying water and wood, feeding the horses, cattle and hogs, and not infrequently when night came, his limbs were tired and sore. A number of Ben's cousins lived in the neighborhood, and that these cousins and other children might have schooling, Ben's father erected a log cabin for a school house and hired a teacher.

While Harrison was still quite young, he was sent away to school, and later to college at Oxford, Ohio, where he graduated with high honors. Upon his return home at the age of nineteen, he decided that he must do something for himself. His father had not made much headway financially on the farm, and the young man determined to choose a profession and make his own career, yet he was reluctant to leave the old farm. The brick walls, the echoing rooms, the porch, and the portico, the spacious yard with its trees, were all sacred to him as were also the horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. He liked to go barefooted as when as a child, and to assist his father on the farm in feeding the stock at night, or in hauling hay with a chain in the day-time. All these he had to leave. Ben chose to go to Cincinnati to read law. Soon after entering upon his profession, he married and moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, where he became eminent as a lawyer. His integrity and legal talents won him public confidence in that state, and within a few years Benjamin Harrison was elected to high political office. His performance of public duty in his own state brought him national renown, and he was elected President in 1892.



William McKinley as a Lad Enlisting in the Service.

THE MOTHER OF WILLIAM McKINLEY

The mother of William McKinley was Miss Nancy Allison, the daughter of a farmer residing at New Lisbon, Ohio. She married William McKinley in 1827. She was the mother of nine children. The parents were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and attended regularly all services. William McKinley, the son, at the age of twenty-four was superintendent of the Sunday School. Mrs. Nancy McKinley lived to see her son become Congressman, Governor, then President. She affectionately embraced her son as they sat together on the veranda of the McKinley home in Canton when the news reached her that he had been nominated for President. She was present when he took the oath of office as President. She died at the age of eighty-six.

WHILE the parents of William McKinley lived at Niles, Ohio, the son was born. His parents were not what would be called well-to-do people, but they were, by no means, as poor as Lincoln's family. As a boy William enjoyed skating, fishing and sports of all kinds. As to his skating, it is said by one of his chums that he could not do much at fancy figures, but he could beat lots of boys when it came to a straight-out race. He'd swing along like a steam engine, often with a stick on both hands and tippet flying from around his neck and under his arms. As to fishing it was said that he had great patience. He would sit for hours waiting for a bite. One day he came home after dark, and his mother inquired where he had been. "I was fishing, mother," he replied. "Fishing," said his mother, "I don't see any fish." "I didn't catch any today. But I located a big fellow, and I'll get him tomorrow."

When William was still a lad, Fort Sumter was fired upon, and a meeting was called at the old Sparrow Tavern in the town of Poland to consider what should be done. McKinley with the rest of the young men of Poland walked over to the Tavern. The hall was decorated with red, white and blue. A recruiting agent was there. "Our country's flag has been fired upon," he said, as he pointed to the starry banner above his head. "It has been trailed in the dust by those who should have cherished and loved it. Who will be the first to defend the glorious Stars and Stripes?" "I expect to go," McKinley said, "but I wish first to consult my mother." The mother consented and back to the old Tavern he went, and proudly signed his name on the list of volunteers. A few days later, the volunteers gathered on the village green, ready to start for the State capital. The whole town came out to bid them good-bye. It was a holiday in Poland. McKinley's mother was there, and with a "God bless you, my boy!" she stood in tears as the last of the volunteers faded from sight. McKinley was very fond of his mother. She said of her son when he became President, "William was always a good boy. I could always depend upon him. He never gave me a cross word, and don't believe he ever told me a lie." With tears of pride and joy she witnessed the inauguration of her son as President. Upon her return home she received each day a letter from the White House from "My William."

William McKinley served through the Civil War with bravery and distinction, and upon his return to Canton, Ohio, became a lawyer. Later he became Congressman, then Governor, and finally President.



Theodore Roosevelt Measuring the Seal

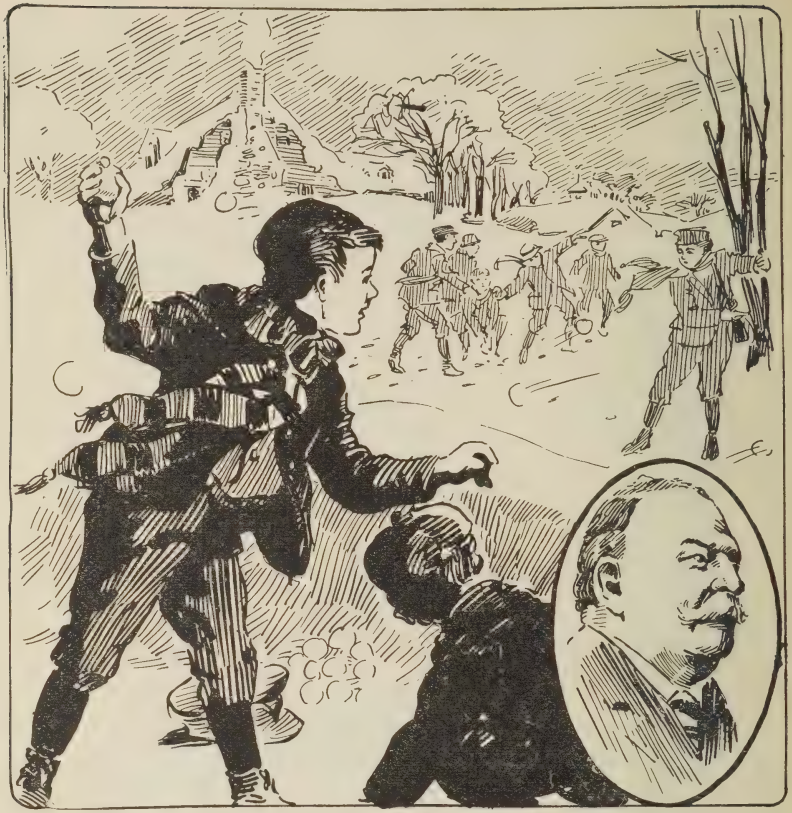
THE MOTHER OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Theodore Roosevelt's mother was Miss Martha Bullock, of Roswell, Georgia. His father was invited by a friend living in Philadelphia to accompany him to the South to serve as his groomsman at a wedding. Here he met the sister of the bride, Miss Martha Bullock, fell in love with her, and within twelve months, married her, and brought her North to live. She died when but fifty years of age. Roosevelt said of her, "My mother was a sweet, gracious, beautiful Southern woman, a delightful companion, and beloved by everybody."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT was a sickly, delicate boy, suffered much from asthma, and frequently had to be taken away on trips to find a place where he could breathe. The parents gave their delicate boy many opportunities to enjoy out-door life in order to build up his health. There were four in the Roosevelt family, two sisters and two brothers. The children were always eager to go to the country when spring came, and very sad when in the late fall the family moved back to town. In the country the children ran barefoot much of the time, and engaged themselves in picking apples, hunting frogs and woodchucks, gathering hickorynuts and chestnuts for sale to their parents, building wigwams in the woods, and sometimes playing Indians by staining themselves with poke-cherry juice.

When still a small boy, Theodore began to take an interest in natural history. In his autobiography he tells how he began his career as a zoologist, "I was walking up Broadway and, as I passed the market to which I used sometimes to be sent before breakfast to get strawberries, I suddenly saw a dead seal laid out on a slad of wood. That seal filled me with every possible feeling of romance and adventure. I asked where it was killed, and was informed in the harbor. As long as that seal remained there, I haunted the neighborhood of the market day after day. I measured it, and I recall that, not having a tape measure, I had to do my best to get its girth with a folding pocket foot-rule, a difficult undertaking. I carefully made a record of the utterly useless measurements, and at once began to make a natural history of my own, on the strength of that seal. I got the seal's skull and kept it in my room. This was the beginning of what my cousins called the 'Roosevelt Museum of Natural History.' "

Unknown to himself, Roosevelt while a boy was very near-sighted. When he got his first gun he was puzzled to find that his companions seemed to find things to shoot at which he could not see at all. One day when he could not see an advertisement on a bill board which the others saw, he told his father, who soon afterwards got him a pair of spectacles which opened up a new world to young Theodore. He said he had no idea how beautiful the world was until he got those spectacles. As a result of this outdoor life, Roosevelt became a robust boy, and was soon able to center upon his studies to fit him for entrance to Harvard College. At college, Roosevelt was not only a close student but was devoted to athletic sports. He was an eager wrestler. After graduation upon his return home he was elected to the Legislature, and there began the public career which continued through so many years and which brought wide renown not only to Roosevelt himself but great honor to his country.



William Howard Taft and the Butcher Town Boys

THE MOTHER OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

Louise M. Torrey was the mother of President Taft. She married Alphonso Taft in 1853. By this union there were born four sons and one daughter. Mrs. Taft was a New England woman of strong character, excellent family, and with much literary talent. The Tafts were prominent Unitarians, and their views were broad and liberal. Unlike other mothers, Mrs. Taft did not want her son to become President. She said: "I do not want my son to be President. He is not my candidate. A place on the Supreme Bench, where my would would administer justice, is my ambition for him. His is a judicial mind, and he loves the law." She died at the age of eighty years. Her death occurred while her son was en route home from the Philipoines.

LIKE Theodore Roosevelt, Judge Alphonso Taft, the father of William Howard Taft, was a great champion of the public school system. These eminent men believed that the public school system of America was the best place for boys to learn to be useful and patriotic citizens. All the children of President Roosevelt attended the common schools. Judge Taft, although able to hire a governess or a private tutor or coach for his sons, yet determined that William, as well as his other sons, should attend the grammar school, the Nineteenth District public school, near his home in the suburbs of Cincinnati. In this home of democratic ideals, the Taft sons grew up, and each of the five sons, in after years, became distinguished in his chosen profession or business. The Taft home was a grand mould to be formed in. The children were given much freedom in their outdoor life, and within doors, there was plenty of discipline. William Howard Taft was taught to treat all the boys of the neighborhood with respect, and although the son of a Judge, was urged to mingle with them in their sports and frolics. With enthusiasm, young Taft mixed up in the feuds between the urchins of Butcher Town to the east and of Tailor Town to the west. These feuds were generally fought out with snow balls in the winter time. Young Taft took great delight in wrestling, in which sport he was never defeated. He was also a fine swimmer and played marbles with great skill.

Throughout William's school days, his father was a guide, companion, counselor and friend. When the boy ranked Number Five after an examination at the high school, Judge Taft chided him with the remarks, "No, my dear, that will not do for William." When Taft was seventeen, he was admitted to Yale, where all the Taft boys also attended. At Yale, Taft kept in mind that his father had sent him there to study and the young man sought to win honors in scholarship as Judge Taft had done in the same college before him. His devotion to his studies did not prevent him, however, from participating in the outdoor and athletic sports of college life. He showed prowess in various athletic contests, especially in wrestling. He was the champion wrestler of the school,—a leadership which no one dared to challenge. Taft graduated with distinction. Upon his return to Cincinnati, he studied law and later entered its practice. So rapidly did he rise in his profession that President Harrison appointed him Solicitor-General of the United States at the age of thirty-three. From that date till his retirement from the Presidency, William Howard Taft has been in the public service, accepting the meagre rewards that service offered rather than the rich emoluments his great talents would have won him in private enterprise.



Woodrow Wilson and His Cousin at Play

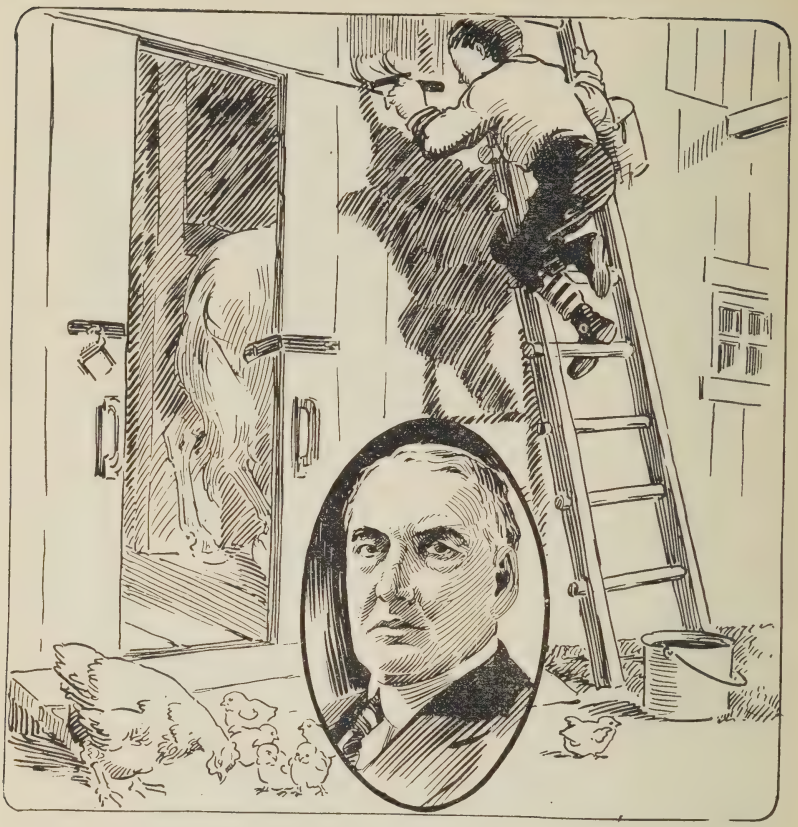
THE MOTHER OF WOODROW WILSON

Janet Woodrow, the mother of Woodrow Wilson, was born in Carlisle, England, the daughter of Rev. Thomas Woodrow, pastor of the Congregational Church there. Dr. Woodrow came to America with his family and occupied some of the prominent pulpits of the South. The daughter matured into a beautiful and accomplished Southern woman. She was wooed and won by Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, a Presbyterian clergyman. President Wilson has said of his mother: "She was one of the most remarkable persons I have ever known. I seem to feel still the touch of her hand, and the sweet steadying influence of her wonderful character. I thank God to have had such a mother!"

THE father of Woodrow Wilson, the Rev. Joseph Ruggles Wilson, was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Staunton, Va., when the son was born. When Woodrow was two years old, the family moved to Augusta, Ga., where the father was to be pastor of the Presbyterian Church. In this city of 15,000 people, the boyhood of Woodrow Wilson was spent. His earliest recollected impression had to do with the breaking out of the Civil War. On a certain day in November, 1860, the little boy, playing on the gate before his father's house, saw two men meet on the sidewalk and heard one of them cry, "Lincoln is elected, and there'll be war." One of the thrilling moments of the boy's early life was the day and evening when the first street car came down the street of Augusta. The boys amused themselves by laying crossed pins on the track to make scissors when the cars passed over. The boys, too, made friends with the drivers and went along with them on their trips, being allowed sometimes to work the brakes and switches.

In his boyhood, Woodrow made frequent visits to his cousin, Jessie Bones, who resided in the country near Augusta. The two cousins spent many a long happy summer day at play in the woods. Frequently, they stained their faces, arms and legs with poke-berry juice and, with head-dresses of feathers and armed with bows and arrows, crept out of the house, and stationed themselves by the side of a lonely road leading from Augusta to a negro settlement in the piney woods. Here the children would lie in wait until chance brought them their victims in the shape of little darkies on their way to town with bundles of lightwood on their heads, but the youthful savages never made any captives.

Woodrow Wilson's first acquaintance with literature was obtained in the home circle. The family had the habit, quite common among educated people in the old South, of having someone read aloud when the home circle gathered about their evening employments. Not only the father and the mother, but also the boy's two sisters, often read aloud, and in this way the boy learned much from noted authors before he knew his letters. Young Wilson's real instructor was his father, who was the son's constant companion. Sunday afternoons were devoted to the son's training. When sitting on the floor, or rather reclining there against an inverted chair, the gifted parson poured into the ears of the spell-bound lad all the stories of his experience, learning and thought. After attending several schools in the South, Woodrow entered Princeton University, and some years later was elected its President. His election as governor of New Jersey brought the College President renown and distinction. His election to the Presidency followed.



Warren G. Harding Painting His Neighbor's Barn

THE MOTHER OF WARREN G. HARDING

The mother of Warren G. Harding was Miss Phoebe Dickerson, whose parents resided near Corsica, Ohio. She married George T. Harding, who lived in the same town. Two days after the marriage, the husband shouldered his rifle and left for the front, for the Civil War was then on. Upon his return to civil life, he took up the study of medicine and became a practicing physician. As success came to Warren G. Harding, he never forgot his mother. She was passionately fond of flowers, and every Sunday morning, her son would take flowers and lay them on his mother's lap. This custom he observed whether at home or abroad.

WARREN G. HARDING was born on his grandfather's farm, where his father then resided, just outside the village of Blooming Grove, Ohio. He was the eldest of eight children. His father, George T. Harding, was the village doctor. The country roundabout was mostly woodland when Warren was born. His grandfather owned a small tract of land, and like his neighbors, was engaged in cutting away the timber and transforming a primitive forest into cultivated farms. As Warren grew up, he learned to fell the trees, chop wood, split rails, plant and hoe corn, and do all things incident to farm life when crops were raised between roots and stumps. Warren attended the village school until he was fourteen years of age, when he entered the Ohio Central College of Iberia from which he was graduated, standing high in scholarship; and it was there, as editor of the college paper, that he first displayed a talent for journalism. Like most aspiring young men of that age, he was obliged to stop for a time now and then, and earn the money with which to pursue his college course. At one time he was cutting corn and doing other farm work for the farmers of the neighborhood. He also found employment during summer months painting his neighbors' barns. A railroad was building through that community at this time and young Warren drove a team and helped to grade the roadbed. He taught a district school at the age of seventeen, and played in the brass band of the village.

At odd times he worked in the little printing office in the village, and everything pertaining to a newspaper office interested him, even down to the smallest detail of the mechanical equipment. He became an expert type-setter by hand, and when the linotype was first introduced he learned to operate the machine. Upon completion of Warren Harding's college course, Dr. Harding, his father, moved to Marion to seek a wider field. Soon after the arrival of the family at the County seat, young Harding desired to purchase "The Star," a struggling daily paper about to discontinue publication. With the small assistance given him by his father, Harding was able to buy the paper. With the enthusiasm of youth, the young man bent his energies to the task of making "The Star" an influential newspaper above reproach. He lived with it by day, and oft-times far into the night. He dreamed of it . At times he performed every function from "devil" to managing editor. By diligence and persistent effort over a period of years, the young owner made "The Star" a prosperous and influential newspaper. In addition to financial returns, this success brought distinction to Warren G. Harding, and his fellow citizens elected him to many important offices. His career in the United States Senate added to his fame, and he was chosen the Republican candidate for the Presidency to succeed President Wilson.

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